

Tuesday, December 16, 1969

Roselle, Illinois 60172

Trial-Death Link Hinted

by DON BRANNAN

Was Black Panther leader Fred Hampton killed because he was going to reveal some interesting facts about the "Chicago Conspiracy 7" defendants?

That question was posed by controversial court critic Sherman H. Skolnick in a talk in Hoffman Estates Saturday. Skolnick addressed about 50 persons at Beth Tikvah Temple on the work of the "Citizens' Committee to Clean Up the Courts."

According to Skolnick, two of the defendants in the conspiracy trial, Rennie Davis and Abbie Hoffman, may actually be undercover employes of the government who should be identified as members of the prosecution.

SKOLNICK CITED the following reasons for suspecting Davis of being in league with the government:

— The Chicago Conspiracy has an office at 28 E. Jackson in Chicago in a building owned by the federal government at the time of the leasing of offices.

— Rennie Davis' father, John Cordon Davis, has held a major position in the federal government from the Truman administration to the present.

— According to court documents, Rennie Davis was permitted to go beyond the jurisdiction of the Chicago federal court and even leave the country while he was being criminally prosecuted.

Legal researcher Skolnick contends that slain Black Panther leader Fred Hampton had knowledge about Davis and his connections with the federal government. So too, states Skolnick, did Bobby Seale. That is one reason that Seale was gagged in court, Skolnick claims.

IN AN ARTICLE written recently for a Chicago underground newspaper, Skolnick

stated that five of the "Conspiracy 7" defendants, in requesting a federal court ruling that the anti-riot law is unconstitutional (thus barring them from being prosecuted), did not challenge what Skolnick called a key provision of the anti-riot legislation which deals with police.

According to Skolnick, it is under that same provision that the conspiracy defendants were indicted and are now being prosecuted.

The result, Skolnick says, is that the anti-riot law is now constitutional and is now accepted as having a class meaning. This means that it is binding on all organizations and persons similarly situated who cross state lines, for purposes of dissent.

Skolnick, chairman of the Citizens' Committee to Clean Up the Courts, said that major committee activities involve research into court corruption, court malpractice, and collusion in court.

"Illinois has the best judges that money can buy," said Skolnick, with tongue in cheek.

SKOLNICK REPEATED charges that former Illinois governor Otto Kerner had received 300 shares of stock in the Civic Center Bank and Trust Co. as a gift while in office. Kerner is now a federal judge in Chicago.

A self-styled muckraker, Skolnick declared that Kerner should make available for public inspection the original checks pertaining to his interest in the Civic Center Bank. He said a document expert should examine Kerner's original records since "anything can be typed on at a later date."

Skolnick added that the case involving stock ownership of the Civic Center Bank was the "least notorious" of six Chicago banks being investigated by the citizens' committee.

"I have been accused of grandstanding, and I plead guilty," Skolnick stated, "I'll do anything to call attention to matters I consider wrong."